MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)
(Formerly Bureau of Health)
11 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Phone 1-800-821-5821 / Fax 207-287-7443

**ADVISORY - Important Information **

2010PHADV005

TO: Hospitals, Infection Control Practitioners, Laboratories, Childcare

Providers, Public Health Nurses, Healthcare Providers.

Public Health - Required, School Nurses

FROM: Dora Anne Mills, M.D., M.P.H., Public Health Director

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SUBJECT: Tuberculosis among the homeless community in Cumberland County

DATE: Thursday, March 25, 2010

TIME: 2:45pm

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PRIORITY: High

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Tuberculosis among the homeless community in Cumberland County - Maine, 2010

Background: Maine CDC is investigating two cases of TB among persons associated with homelessness in Cumberland County. These two cases were identified within 6 months of each other. Laboratory testing indicates the M. tuberculosis bacteria are genetically identical.

Two linked cases of TB is considered an outbreak in Maine. The purpose of this notice is to make health care providers aware of the outbreak and to recommend increased surveillance of TB.

TB is an airborne infection, spread by droplet nuclei that are expelled when a person with infectious TB coughs, sneezes, speaks or sings.

Recommendations: Area health care providers are encouraged to consider Tuberculosis in persons with:

- Signs and symptoms consistent with Tuberculosis:
 - o a cough lasting for three weeks or more,
 - o chest pain
 - o hemoptysis
 - o fever
 - o chills
 - o night sweats
 - o appetite loss
 - weight loss
 - o fatigue
- Social history of homelessness. A homeless person is an individual who has no fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence and/or whose primary nighttime residence includes welfare hotels, single room occupancy hotels (SRO), congregate shelters, or transitional housing for the mentally ill. In addition a homeless person may also be defined as a person who has no home or currently has unstable housing.

For persons meeting the above criteria it is recommended that they be evaluated for TB. This evaluation should include a medical history, physical examination, tuberculin skin test, chest radiograph and when indicated bacteriologic exam.

All cases of suspected Tuberculosis should be reported immediately by phone to the Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.

For more information: Contact Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821. Information on Tuberculosis is available at: http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/ddc/epi/tuberculosis/

Additional resources: Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis Among Homeless Persons. Recommendations of the Advisory Council for the Elimination of Tuberculosis http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00019922.htm